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The Foxborough Conservation Commission owns land which abuts the F. Gilbert Hills State Forest. As neighbors to the state forest, the Commission appreciated the opportunity to attend and provide comments at the 22 July 2015 public meeting with regard to the SE Home Fuelwood 2015 program current being proposed at the State Forest. The meeting was very informative and many of the Commission's comments were addressed. The Commission would like to build upon the public meeting discussion by emphasizing the importance of protecting vernal pools and cultural resources when the state selects trees for cutting. Also, cutting should take place when the ground is frozen to minimize the disturbance of soil which could increase the chance of invasive species introduction and growth. The Commission would also appreciate receiving an invitation to the "walk through" of the route and area of the planned fuelwood program. Please send the invitation to the Foxborough Conservation Manager Jane Pierce at JPierce@foxboroughma.gov for distribution to Commission members.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this program.

Regards,

Judi Johnson
Foxborough Conservation Commission

Bureau of Forestry (BOF) Response

Thank you for your comments regarding our public outreach process on the SE Home Fuelwood 2015 project. We are hopeful that all of our outreach on forest management projects and timber sales are as informative with the public's comments addressed.

The BOF shares your concern of the importance of protecting vernal pools and cultural resources. Every vernal pool is treated as though certified regardless of its status during any of our forest management projects. Additionally, we often exceed MA BMPs and regulations by protecting vernal pools with a zero cut buffer. Cultural resources are also reviewed prior to the project by the Department Archeologist and protections are offered to those resources through documented, internal protocol.

Although cutting probably will not occur in frozen conditions, the firewood removal will incur virtually no ground disturbance as wood will be carried by hand from the cutting areas to road edge.

Yes, we will be sure to make sure that the Foxborough Conservation Commission is well informed of our planned "pre harvest" walk.